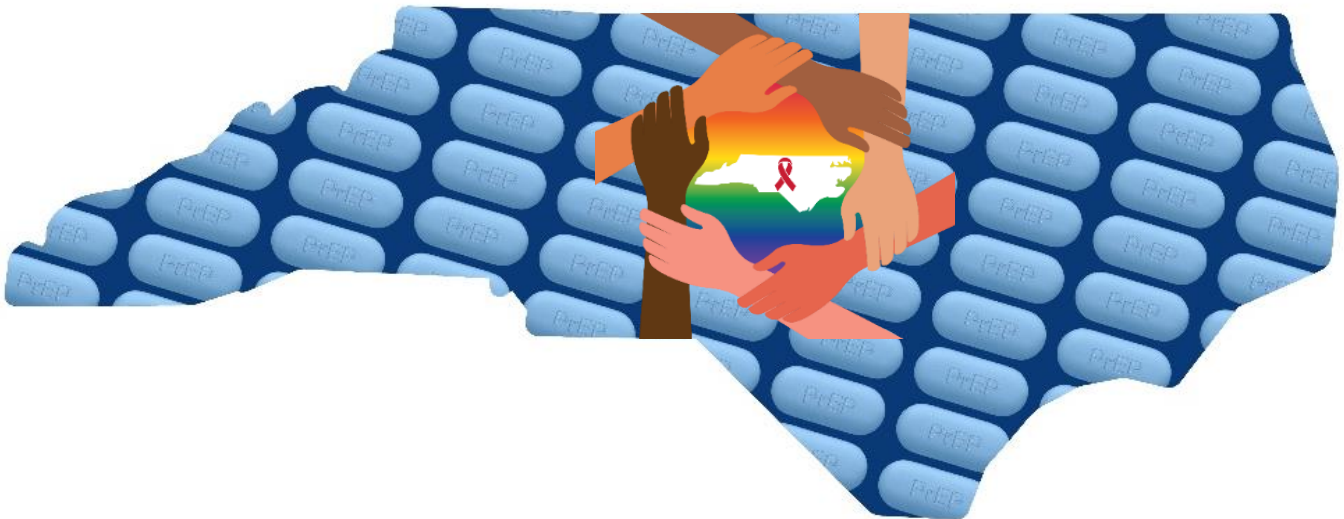


Let's Talk About PrEP

North Carolina's HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Toolkit



Prepared by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services •
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What is PrEP?

PrEP is short for **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis** and is a once-daily pill taken orally or an injection given every other month in conjunction with prevention strategies to reduce the risk of a person acquiring HIV.

PrEP is for people who are negative for HIV but are at increased risk for contracting HIV, such as men who have sex with men (MSM) who have multiple partners, non-monogamous, sexually active men and women, people who inject drugs, and adults whose partner's HIV status is unknown.

PrEP reduces the risk of a person getting HIV from sex by 99%. PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from injection drug use by at least 74%. PrEP is less effective when not taken as prescribed. Since PrEP only protects against HIV, safe sex methods including condom use are still important for protection against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

PrEP has been a game changer in HIV Prevention since its inception in 2012. Currently, three PrEP medications have been approved by the FDA: Emtricitabine/tenofovir TDF (**Truvada**), Emtricitabine/tenofovir TAF (**Descovy**), and the first long-acting injectable PrEP **Apretude**. See below for usage recommendations for each drug. There also may be an annual injection option for PrEP in the near future.

	Truvada	Descovy	Apretude
Cis-gender Men or Transgender Women	✓	✓	✓
Cis-gender Women or Transgender Men	✓	✗	✓



NCPReP Project

PrEP matters because it's a game-changer in the fight against HIV. Imagine the power of a single pill that can shield someone from a virus that has claimed millions of lives and caused untold suffering. PrEP gives people the ability to take control of their sexual health and to live with dignity and confidence. It's not just a medical breakthrough – it's a tool of empowerment, offering hope and protection to those who have faced stigma, vulnerability, or barriers to prevention. PrEP is more than medicine; it's a statement that no one's future should be defined by HIV.

The Division of Public Health's Communicable Disease Branch (CDB) has launched a statewide project (NCPReP) to increase HIV PrEP awareness and accessibility to PrEP services. The goal of the project is to support NC prevention partners to increase access to PrEP services for people at high risk for HIV. This program focuses on men who have sex with men (MSM), particularly young African American MSM who have an elevated risk of HIV acquisition according to data; however, PrEP is a valuable tool for anyone at increased risk for HIV. NCPReP allows prevention partners to collaborate and develop relationships within communities to identify those at most risk for HIV and link them to qualified PrEP providers.

The CDB provides capacity building and technical assistance to increase the ability of providers across NC to provide high quality, accessible PrEP services. NC PrEP Coordinators develop collaborative relationships with clinical providers and prevention agencies across the State to ensure they are well informed and can provide PrEP services within their regions/jurisdictions. Their role is to ensure agency staff and providers are well-informed about PrEP services and equipped to provide them effectively. The CDB also convened a Statewide HIV PrEP Advisory Committee (SPAC) composed of providers, consumers, academics, and others interested in increasing PrEP access across NC. This body meets every other month and provides community input and guidance into our statewide PrEP plan. For more information on NCPReP, contact the Statewide PrEP Coordinator at NCPRePProject@dhhs.nc.gov

In addition, NC Family Planning Medicaid's "Be Smart" program has incorporated PrEP into men's reproductive health. This program covers transportation, screening, testing and follow-up visits to people taking PrEP and allows men to access PrEP through all NC Family Planning clinics. Medicaid Family Planning clinics are for anyone – women OR men – who are able to have children, sexual orientation is not a consideration. North Carolinians can apply on line at nc.epass.gov or in person at your local Department of Social Services for PrEP services. Go to <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/family-planning-medicaid> for more information.



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NCPREP Project Guidance

Over the last few years, the NCPREP team has streamlined the referral process for clients seeking PrEP by providing our funded agencies with clear guidance for the [Evaluation Web HIV Testing Data Form](https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/stds/docs/NC-HIV-TestingDataForm.pdf) (<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/stds/docs/NC-HIV-TestingDataForm.pdf>) and the [PrEP Referral and Linkage Form](https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/stds/docs/PrEP-Ref-and-LinkageForm.pdf) (<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/stds/docs/PrEP-Ref-and-LinkageForm.pdf>). This process enables clients needing PrEP to access it without unnecessary delays. You can find tips on how to complete the above forms at this link: [Evaluation Web HIV Testing Form Guidance PrEP Referral and Linkage Form Guidance](https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/stds/docs/NCPrepDataCollectionDataEntryProcedures.pdf) (<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/stds/docs/NCPrepDataCollectionDataEntryProcedures.pdf>).

In addition to simplifying the referral process, the NCPREP team would like to stress the importance of accurate and timely data entry. The HIV/STD Prevention program requires our funded agencies to enter data monthly into the Evaluation Web per program standards and timelines.

Question three of the Evaluation Web HIV Testing Data Form focuses on PrEP. It's important for agencies to understand that in this section of the form, the question "Was the client provided with services to assist with linkage to a PrEP provider?" should always be answered "no." This linkage is the responsibility of our regional and state PrEP Coordinators that call the client to see if they went to their PrEP appointment.



How do I Pay for PrEP?

Most insurance plans and the NC Medicaid program cover doctor visits and medication charges for PrEP as a prevention clinic visit. According to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), PrEP must be free under almost all health plans, meaning a client should not be charged for the PrEP medication, clinic visit, and related lab tests.

All pharmaceutical companies that make PrEP drugs have programs that can assist your clients if the client has health insurance plans which include a co-pay. If clients are taking Truvada or Descovy, the **Gilead Advancing Access program** can help lower or completely cover the cost of your co-pay. This program covers up to \$7,200 a year in co-pay assistance. You can enroll at www.gileadadvancingaccess.com/patient. ViiVConnect also covers co-pay assistance for Apretude for up to \$7,850 a year. You can apply for this program at www.apretudecopayprogram.com. Both programs also provide PrEP drug assistance to uninsured people.

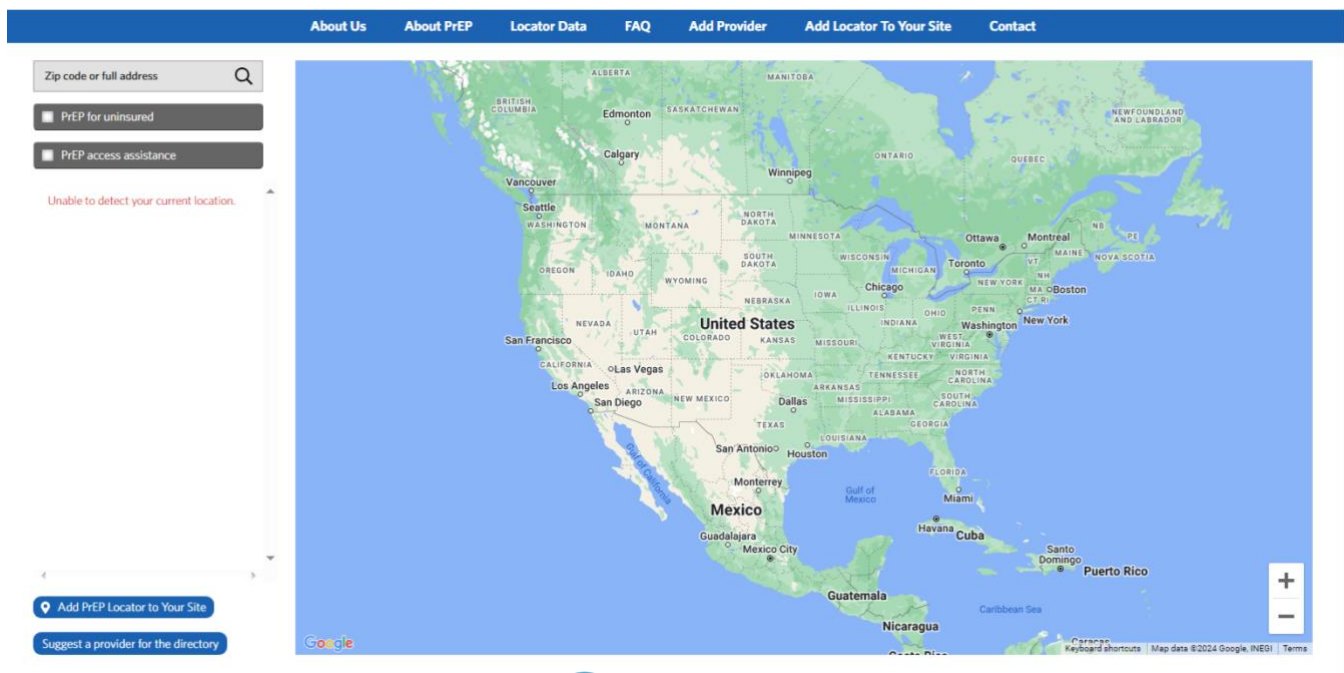


How To Find a PrEP Provider?

PrEP locator is a tool that was created by Emory University to help individuals easily find an HIV PrEP provider in their area. This tool was developed in response to the need for increased access to PrEP services and to make it easier for people to connect with healthcare providers who can prescribe HIV PrEP. PrEP locator is an easy-to-use database.

To access the PrEP locator, go to www.preplocator.org and enter your ZIP code. A list of providers within a 25-mile radius will appear. You can click on each listing to access detailed information, including hours of operation and specific requirements for obtaining PrEP services. No health insurance? No problem – the feature allows access to providers who serve clients without health insurance.

An easy-to-read list of Providers in North Carolina can be found at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JL-G0NcmFb1EqC2gRe8bV2ULSFISf-65sNAaiNOU6E/edit?usp=sharing>) The list includes the region it is in, the name and address of the provider, and if they take uninsured clients. The regions are as follows: Region 1-Asheville, Region 2- Hickory, Region 3- Winston-Salem, Region 4- Greensboro, Region 5- Lumberton, Region 6- Raleigh, Region 7- Wilmington, Region 8- Wilson, Region 9- Ahoskie, Region 10- Greenville, and finally the Transitional Grant Area (TGA)- Charlotte.



PrEP Locator  Find Your Provider

Foundational Training and Development

Provider Trainings:

The HIV/STD Prevention program has partnered with UNC HIV Training and Education Center (HTEC)-to help providers receive training to offer PrEP. At UNC, clinicians offer a lunch and learn for providers interested in prescribing PrEP. This is a one-hour training course that provides them with all the tools and knowledge they need to offer PrEP. HTEC provides an array of HIV/STI 101 and PrEP 101 trainings. Providers are interested in this training can contact the Southeast AIDS Education and Training Center Program by visiting <https://www.seaetc.com/contact-us/>.

Agency Staff Trainings:

The HIV/STD Prevention Program also partners with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to offer trainings. The CDC offers a wide range of HIV/STI and PrEP educational courses, including:

- Testing in clinical and nonclinical settings
- High Impact Interventions and Public Health Strategies i.e. ARTAS (Anti-Retroviral Treatment and Access to Services)
- Structural Interventions i.e. Social Determinants of Health, Condom Distribution, Syringe Services Programs
- Prevention for Persons Living with HIV i.e. Linkage, Retention and Reengagement to care

If you or anyone from your agency is interested in these, please contact the HIV Prevention Coordinator at NCPPrEPProject@dhhs.nc.gov



Additional PrEP Resources

HIV/PrEP Maps and Data – AIDSVu - [AIDSVu](https://map.aidsvu.org/prep/county/case/none/none/usa?geoContext=national) (<https://map.aidsvu.org/prep/county/case/none/none/usa?geoContext=national>) is an interactive online mapping tool that provides visual data on the HIV epidemic in the United States. This tool allows users to explore HIV prevalence, new diagnoses, and PrEP usage.

“Be Smart” Program - program from NC Family Planning Medicaid has now integrated PrEP into its services for men's reproductive health. For more information, go to <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/family-planning-medicaid>.

Billing and Coding - Many patients have reported getting a bill after receiving PrEP services. PrEP is available for free through most private insurance plans. The CDC notes that there are two new billing advances that can help address some of these challenges. This new guide describes the procedure and diagnosis codes accepted by public and private insurance. More information can be found at [https://nastad.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/PDF-HIV-Prevention-BillingAndCoding-101223.pdf?ACSTrackingID=USCDCNPIN_162-DM116278&ACSTrackingLabel=New Billing and Coding Guide for PrEP, PEP, and Other HIV Prevention Strategies&deliveryName=USCDCNPIN_162-DM116278](https://nastad.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/PDF-HIV-Prevention-BillingAndCoding-101223.pdf?ACSTrackingID=USCDCNPIN_162-DM116278&ACSTrackingLabel=New%20Billing%20and%20Coding%20Guide%20for%20PrEP%2C%20PEP%2C%20and%20Other%20HIV%20Prevention%20Strategies&deliveryName=USCDCNPIN_162-DM116278).

NASTAD - As one of the leading associations that helps aid in health equity, this amazing program has valuable resources to help you when it comes to PrEP. Learn more about NASTAD's PrEP resources by visiting <https://nastad.org/prep-access>.

Referral and Linkage Process for CDB Prevention Program supported agencies - Our referral process is very simple when you keep in mind the definitions. A referral means that you have made a PrEP appointment for the client, linkage means that the client attended that PrEP appointment. Go to https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1H6JN8F_9PMPybuUFOMv_Ns6b1NMviA49RkR86T4LSlc/edit?usp=sharing should for assistance in completing and submitting the referral and linkage form.

State and Regional PrEP Coordinators - To locate your PrEP Coordinator go to <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G2GNCD0Ix5kLPMs8OIDMsqYBuHGFI4PQlvNkluMglAw/edit?usp=sharing>.



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